

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6150

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY RABAT

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, PGOV, MR, SS

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN ELECTION AND SAHARA QUESTION

1. MAURITANIA HELD ITS QUINQUENNIAL PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ON AUGUST 8 (PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH WAS UNOPPOSED). AT SAME TIME, MAURITANIANS VOTED ON SLATE OF UNOPPOSED REPRESENTATIVES TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL STATISTICS, THERE WERE 586,517 REGISTERED VOTERS. 575,269 CAST VALID BALLOTS, 570,858 OF WHOM SUPPORTED PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH. THUS PRESIDENT RECEIVED 98 PERCENT OF VALID BALLOTS CAST. PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION HAD ESSENTIALLY SAME RESULTS. RESIDENTS OF TIRIS EL GHARBIA (MAURITANIAN PORTION OF WESTERN SAHARA) TOOK PART IN MAURITANIAN ELECTION FOR FIRST TIME.

2. COMMENTING AUGUST 10 OTAELECTION, ACTING PRESIDENT AND MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL SOVEREIGNTY AHMED OULD SALEH EMPHASIZED THAT ELECTION WAS OVERWEHLMING MANDATE FOR POLICIES OF OULD DADDAH GOVERNMENT. RESPONDING TO JOURNALISTS QUESTION CONCERNING SELF-DETERMINATION AND RECENT ELECTION IN TIRIS EL
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GHARBIA, SALEH REPLIED: QUOTE WE ARE BEING PRESENTED AS A

COUNTRY WHICH AS IMPOSED A SOLUTION, AN ANNEXATION PURE AND SIMPLE WHICH DOESNOT BENEFIT FROM THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE OF TIRIS EL GHARBIA. YOU KNOW THAT EVEN BEFORE THESE ELECTIONS THE POPULATIONITSELF , THROUGH ITS REPRESENTATIVES AT ALL LEVELS, AND AGREED WITH NOUAKCHOTT. EVERYWHERE IN MAURITANIA IT (THE POPULATION) EXPRESSED ITSELF, IT EVEN FOUGHT IN THE RANKS OF OUR ARMY AND SECURITY FORCES AGAINST THE ARMED BANDS WHO WANTED TO SUBJUGATE IT. IF THAT WAS NOT SUFFICIENT, THE PARTICIPATION IN THE PESIDENTIAL ELECTION ND THE ELECTION OF DEPUTIES REPRESENTING THEPOPULATION OF TIRIS EL SHARBIA CONSTITUTE THE MOST ELOQUENT PROOF THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE INDEED EXERCISED SELF-DETERMINATION. UNQUOTE

3. COMMENT: DURING FUTURE DISCUSSIONS OF SAHARA QUESTION, BOTH INSIDE MAURITANIA AND BEFORE INTERNATIONAL FORAM, WE EXPECT THAT GIRM WILL CITE AUGUST 8 VOTE AS "PROOF" THAT SPEOPLE OF TIRIS EL SHARBIA APPROVE OF MAURITANIAN CONTROL OVER SOURTHERN PART OF WESTERN SHAARA. BUILDING ON FOUNDATION OF PRESIDENT'S ASSERTION THAT SAHARA REFERENDUM IS IMPOSSIBLE IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THANKS TO POLITICAL CONFUSTION AND POPULATION DISPERSALS CAUSED BY ALGERIAN INTERFERENCE (NOUAKCHOTT 776), GIRM WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY ARGUE NOW THAT REQUIREMENTS OF SELF-DETERMINATION HAVE BEEN MET (IF NOT TO FULLEST THEORETICAL SATISFACTION AT LEAST WITHIN LIMITS OF THE POSSIBLE).

HANDYSIDE

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